

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 SP-03 NSC-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 L-03

COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 AID-20 DRC-01 /122 W

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R 171255Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6976

INFO AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BLANTYRE 507

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PFOR, MI, SF

SUBJ: MALAWI SUSPENDS LABOR RECRUITMENT FOR SOUTH AFRICA,
RHODESIA

REF: BLANTYRE 457

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. GOM OFFICE OF PRESIDENT AND CABINET
ANNOUNCED APRIL 16 THAT CABINET HAD CONFIRMED DECISION BY
PRESIDENT BANDA TO SUSPEND RECRUITING OF MALAWIAN LABORERS
BY SOUTH AFRICAN WENELA ORGANIZATION UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.
ANNOUNCEMENT SAID RESTRICTION ON RECRUITING WOULD ALSO APPLY
TO ANY OTHER FOREIGN LABOR ORGANIZATION FROM APRIL 11 "UNTIL
FURTHER NOTICE." END UNCLASSIFIED.

2. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. SOUTH AFRICAN
EMBOFF EXPRESSED OPINION TO CHARGE APRIL 16 THAT SUSPENSION
ON RECRUITING WOULD BE TEMPORARY. EMBOFF ALLEGED GOM CONCERN
Arose FROM RECENT WENELA AIR CRASH (REFTEL) AND DESIRE ASSURE
SAFER TRANSPORTATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR MALAWI WORKERS BEFORE
RESUMING RECRUITMENT. MEANWHILE, EMBOFF SAID RETURNING WENELA
WORKERS ARE BEING REPATRIATED ON COMPLETION CONTRACTS BY
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AIR MALAWI BAC-111 FLIGHTS OPERATING OVERNIGHT SCHEDULE.
EMBOFF DOUBTED MALAWI WAS IN POSITION TO AFFORD PERMANENT

SUSPENSION EXPORT OF LABOR PROGRAMS; SAID 80,000 MALAWIANS
WERE STILL IN SOUTH AFRICA UNDER WENELA ALONE.

3. EMBASSY COMMENT: APPROXIMATELY 300,000 MALAWIANS (OVER
60 PERCENT OF SALARIED WORK FORCE) ARE EMPLOYED IN SOUTH AFRICA
AND RHODESIA UNDER VARIOUS EMPLOYMENT SCHEMES. THEIR
REPATRIATED EARNINGS ARE IMPORTANT FACTOR IN MALAWI ECONOMY,
THUS LENDING WEIGHT TO ASSUMPTION MALAWI CAN ILL AFFORD HASTY
SUSPENSION OF SUCH PROGRAMS. HOWEVER FOR PAST SIX MONTHS
PRESIDENT BANDA AND OTHER GOM SPOKESMEN HAVE BEGUN PUBLICLY
TO SUGGEST THAT MALAWIAN WORKERS STAY HOME. CURRENT RESTRICTION
ON RECRUITING BY ALL FOREIGN ORGANIZATIONS (NOT JUST WENELA)
ADDS CURIOUS FACTOR AND SUGGESTS THAT MALAWI MAY INDEED BE
CONSIDERING WAYS OF SCALING DOWN THE PERCENTAGE OF ITS WORK-
FORCE OCCUPIED ABROAD.
FARBER

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